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Alleged Bait and Switch Spending of San Jose Evergreen College District Bond Money Questioned

Oct. 8, 2013 | By Tony Kovaleski, Mark Villarreal and Liza Meak

[Video Link](#) | www.nbcbayarea.com

EXCERPT: Voters approved it, homeowners are paying for it, but taxpayers, teachers and students claim administrators at the San Jose Evergreen College District pulled a bait and switch with bond money. ...

Voters gave the district more than a quarter billion dollars when it passed Measure G in 2010. The bond never mentioned building a new theater, but it did say it would construct a new vocational technology building.

"These buildings are old, they haven't been maintained," vocational-technical instructor Steve Mansfield said. He gave NBC Bay Area a tour of the buildings, and pointed out water damage, broken windows, exposed wiring, and chipping paint. ... When City College administrators went to voters in 2010 asking for \$268 million, the bond measure said the money would be used to improve facilities.

Teachers came to NBC Bay Area after, they say, their concerns to administrators were ignored. "Faculty members have been told to sit down and shut up, and don't ask any more questions," English Instructor Charles Heimler said.

Now, Heimler said, he's ready to speak out. "What voters approved in 2010 is not going to be built," he said. Heimler is not the only one upset. ...

... An internal report shows that instead of replacing 60-year-old run-down classrooms, trustees and administrators in the San Jose Evergreen Community College District approved spending more than \$22 million on a brand new theater and media arts center.

"Nowhere in the voter information did it say build a new theater. It said very clearly and distinctly build a new vocational technology center," Heimler said. As for the vo tech buildings, the district will spend \$7 million for refurbishing and renovation. ...

...In the 2010 voters guide, groups opposed to bond said the Community College District had a history of wasting taxpayer dollars. The argument against the bond said in part, "The college district has no financial credibility. The District's history of changing priorities after they get our money has resulted in incomplete, illegally initiated and mismanaged projects." ...

To see the video and read the complete article, please visit:
www.nbcbayarea.com/news/local/Spending-of-San-Jose-Evergreen-College-District-Community-College-Bond-Money-Questioned-226796191.html

San Diego County - South Bay School Districts Update

South Bay Judge Upholds Majority of Indictments in Pay-to-Play

Oct. 10, 2013 | By Susan Luzzaro | www.sandiegoreader.com

EXCERPT: Twenty-two charges were dropped for defendants in a South Bay corruption case during hearings held on October 8 and 9. Twenty charges were dropped by the people, as represented by Deputy District Attorney Leon Schorr, in a pre-trial paring of 232 indictments handed down by the Grand Jury in January 2013.

The case initially became public when high-ranking school officials, trustees, contractors, and a bond salesman linked to South Bay school districts, had their homes or offices raided by the DA's office in 2011. By December 2012, as a result of a broadening investigation, the Grand Jury charged 15 defendants with charges which included perjury, bribery and filing a false statement.

Most charges relate to alleged pay-to-play activity which involved Sweetwater Union High School District's Proposition O for \$644 million and Southwestern College's Proposition R for \$389 million.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, Judge Ana Espana listened to the defendants' attorneys' arguments for additional dismissals; however, in the majority of cases she remained unconvinced.

After the October 9 hearing Schorr commented, "We are very pleased with the outcome of the hearings. Judge Espana's rulings confirm the hard work of the grand jurors and their desire to hold these defendants accountable for their actions."...

... Paul Pfingst, attorney for former Sweetwater superintendent Jesus Gandara, took issue with the much-publicized lobster dinner that Gandara received--paid for by Amigable. (The lobster was flown in for the occasion and described as "still kicking.") Pfingst argued that there were no business discussions at the meal and that it was a social occasion and should not be considered bribery.

Schorr countered that the \$1,383 dinner at Bacis, which was also attended by Sweetwater's former trustee Greg Sandoval and current trustee Arlie Ricasa, was intentionally lavish to demonstrate "this is how we will take care of you if we are selected." Schorr also noted that this meal and many others were not disclosed on Gandara's 700 conflict-of-interest form.

(Judge) Espana did not dismiss the bribery charge. She said that the meal appeared in the context of other meals or events that happened prior to Sweetwater trustees selecting Amigable and his company.

The lobster dinner in question took place in March 2007. The company which Amigable worked for at that time, Gilbane, along with Seville Group Inc. were selected to manage Sweetwater's Proposition O in April 2007.

To read the complete article please visit:
www.sandiegoreader.com/weblogs/news-ticker/2013/oct/10/south-bay-judge-upholds-222-indictments-in-pay-to-

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Next CalBOC Board Meeting:

November 15, 2013

Sacramento Chamber of Commerce, 1 Capitol Mall. Conference call access

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San Diego Grand Jury

Sweetwater & Southwestern - South County transcripts - By Ricky Young

www.utsandiego.com

U-T Watchdog has been covering the release of grand jury transcripts in the South County corruption case brought by District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis involving more than 200 charges against 15 officials and contractors at two school districts and one community college.

utsandiego.com/news/2013/jun/17/south-county-grand-jury-transcripts-compiled

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Mission Statement

To promote school district accountability by improving the training and resources available to California's Proposition 39 School Bond Oversight Committees and educating the state legislature, local school boards and the public about the oversight and reporting powers these Citizens' Bond Oversight Committees (CBOCs) have, and to advocate on a state level, where appropriate, on issues of common concern to all CBOCs.

Information from the May 10, 2013 CalBOC Conference

www.calboc.org/may10.html

Archived Newsletters

To view all with topics visit: calboc.org/reviews.html
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